poor to the formal banking system through intermediaries, like Self-Help Groups (SHGs)/Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) has launched a pilot project, with the approval of RBI under which 500 SHGs are expected to be covered. NABARD provides refinance to the banks which provide finance to SHGs under the pilot project. Some departure from the usual banking norms has been made under the pilot project and flexibility has been given to the members of the group to decide about the norms of lending to their own members. The bank loan is given in lumpsum to the group and an individual member need not go to the bank to execute any document to obtain the loan. Linking of the poor with the banks through SHGs NGOs is expected to reduce the transaction cost for banks, facilitate better appraisal, better supervision monitoring and provide prompt and need based credit to the poor.

Duty on Stainless Steel Items

*100 SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR
SAMBHAJI RAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appeared in the Hindustan Times of 2nd February, 1994 captioned, "Steel Units misusing excise duty tariff" to the effect that producers of stainless steel are taking advantage of the difference in duties leviable on stainless steel items and alloy steel bars and rods;

(b) if so, the total estimated loss of excise on this account; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to avoid losses on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTY): (a) to (c) Attention of Government has been drawn to a news item which appeared in the February 2, 1994, issue of the Hindustan Times alleging that some steel firms in the North are mis-declaring "staninless steel bars and roads" as "other alloy steel" products and thereby clearing them at lower rate of duty.

The position is that the Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985, makes a distinction between "stainless steel" and "other alloy steel" products. The composition of products emanating from these two categories is different and they are also known differently in the market. Different rates of duty have been prescribed for them. The Harmonised System of Nomenclature also makes a distinction between the two categories. Accordingly, different rates of duty have been prescribed for each category.

Products of stainless steel are leviable to an ad valorem duty at 12.5% whereas most of those made of other alloy steel pay a specific rate of duty of Rs. 1,000 per Metric Tonne, which is lower than the former. (Some products made of other alloy steel are also chargeable at 12.5%). A differential in duty, with a lower rate for products of "other alloy steel" has been prevalent for some time (Pre-Budget position).

Mis-declaration of stainless steel products as those of "other alloy steel" amounts to an Offence and is liable to action under the Central Excise Law. There are six cases alleging such mis-declaration amounting to evasion of duty of Rs. 13.62 Crores which have been detected and show cause notices issued.

Commmemorative Postal Stamp on Late Padmashri Anant Gopal Sheorey

785. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) wnether Government have received any representation requesting to issue a postal stamp to commemorate the memory of the great fighter and Gandhian of Central India, Late Padmashri Anant Gopal Shorey;

(b) what decision Government have taken on this demand;

(c) what is the tentative date before which such a stamp will be released; and

(d) whether the Anant Gopal Sheorey Trust of Nagpur will be asked to make preliminary plans and preparations for such stamps release function?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to the extent procedure, a decision is generally taken after the recommendations of the Philatelic Advisory Committee become available.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Cost Reductions in Phone Services

786. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any cost reduction of phone services will be provided for rural phone users in 1994-95;

(b) whether it is also a fact that increasing revenues of Telcom. Department have not resulted in any benefit to customers in terms of lower rentals and lower service charges; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for the inability of Telecom. Department in not passing on any benefits to the subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposals under consideration.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The increase in revenue is inter-alia being used for vast expansion including cross subsidization of rural telecom and upgradation of network for improved service to the customers. It has, therefore, not been possible for the Deptt. to lower the rental or service charges.

डाक-घर इत्यादि के लिये इमारतों का निर्माण

787. **चौधरी हरमोहन सिंह:** क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि डाकघर दूरसंचार कार्यालयों की इमारतों तथा स्टाफ क्वार्टरों का 65 से 70 प्रतिशत तक निर्माण कार्य ही पूरा हुआ है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या इस संबंध में चूक के लिये किसी व्यक्ति की जवाबदेही निश्चित की गयी है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में सरकार ने क्या कार्यवाही की है?

संचार मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री सुखराम): (क)(i) **डाक विभाग** भवनों का निर्माण धनराशि की उपलब्धता पर निर्भर करता है। डाक भवनों के लिये वर्ष 1992-93 के योजना परिव्यय का पूरा उपयोग किया गया है। वर्ष 1993-94 में भी योजना परिव्यय का पूरा उपयोग होने की आशा है।

(ii) **दूरसंचार विभाग:** दूरसंचार प्रशासनिक भवनों का निर्माण आवश्यकता के आधार पर किया जाता है, बशर्ते कि पर्याप्त धनराशि उपलब्ध रहे । टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज भवनों का निर्माण उपस्करों की सप्लाई और कमीशनिंग प्रोग्रामों के अनुरूप किया जाता है। स्टाफ क्वार्टरों का निर्माण पूर्व-निर्धारित संतुष्टि स्तर प्राप्त करने के लिए किया जाता है जो आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना अवधि (1992—97) के लिये 14 प्रतिशत है। यह कार्य भी पर्याप्त निधि/भूमि की उपलब्धता पर निर्भर करता है।

(ख) और (ग) **डाक व दूरसंचार विभाग:** उपर्युक्त (क) को देखते हुए प्रश्न नहीं उठता।